

**Lake Michigan Fisheries Team**  
**November 9, 2000 – Sheboygan**

**Notes**

(prepared by Bill Horns, November 10, 2000)

**Present:** Bill Horns, Sue Marcquenski, Al Kaas, Steve Hewett, Lee Meyers, Tom Hansen, Terry Lychwick, John Kubisiak, Steve Hogler, John Janssen, Brad Eggold, Justine Hasz, Pradeep Hirethota, Paul Peeters, Steve Fajfer, Mark Opgenorth

**Next meeting:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday, January 25, 2001, Deland Center, Sheboygan

This is summary of decisions, recommendations, and planned actions, and is not intended as a review of all topics discussed or reviewed at the meeting.

**1) Yellow perch in Green Bay.** Commercial fishing for yellow perch in Green Bay has been poor. Justine Hasz led a review of available data, and asked the LMFT to consider recommending an emergency of closure of sport and commercial ice fishing for the period January 1 through May 20, 2001. The LMFT was not willing to make that recommendation at this time. The following steps will be taken to improve our understanding of the situation:

- The 2000 creel survey analysis will be accelerated for completion by Jan. 15.
- Justine will crunch some numbers to estimate growth rates by yellow perch of the 1998 year class (for comparison with other years) and exploitation rates in recent years.
- Justine will present the available information for discussion with the Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board on Nov. 27.
- Justine will present the available information for discussion by the Yellow Perch Task Group on Nov. 29-30.
- I will summarize the data for the Natural Resources Board on December 6, as part of the annual overview of commercial fishing quotas. I will use that opportunity to be sure the NRB understands the link between this issue and the proposal to revise the relicensing criteria for commercial fishers.

**2) Relicensing criteria for Lake Michigan commercial fishers.** As a result of declining catches of yellow perch in Green Bay and bloater chubs in Lake Michigan, a number of commercial fishers in Zone 1 and Zone 3 may at risk of not meeting relicensing requirements next summer. The LMFT reviewed data summarized by Al Blizel and adopted the following recommendation, which will be drafted as an administrative rule and described in a green sheet for presentation to the NRB on December 6, with a request for approval of hearings during January.

*The LMFT recommends changing the criteria for relicensing Lake Michigan commercial fishers by setting the alternative minimum catch requirement at 30 times the average daily catch during the 12 months immediately preceding June 1 of the*

*year the application for relicensing is made. Specifically, the LMFT recommends amending NR 25.03(2)(b)3a as follows: “. . . , where X1, X2, and X3 = 30 times the average reported total daily harvest of yellow perch, menominees, whitefish and chubs from zone 1, 2, or 3, respectively, by all licensed commercial fishers during the license year ~~preceding~~ 12 months preceding June 1 of the previous license year.”*

- 3) **Proposed study regarding trawling for whitefish.** The LMFT discussed Mike LeClair’s recent letter regarding a possible study of trawling for whitefish. I will draft a response letter, which I will circulate for comment, restating our usual policy on special studies, pointing out that no staff time is available now to help with the study, and indicating three specific questions of interest to us: 1) What would the incidental catch be in a whitefish trawl fishery? 2) How would a whitefish trawl fishery effect sublegal whitefish (both immediate and latent mortality)? 3) How would a whitefish trawl fishery effect lake trout (immediate and latent mortality)?
- 4) **Review of 1995 LMIFMP.** I’m going to finish this over the weekend.
- 5) **Work planning for 2001-2003.** We discussed the process, the apparent funding shortfall, and the desirability of describing all work in project proposals, even when the work is not directly related to funded projects. Because I believe that few, if any, of the projects from last year are completely expendable, and because funding in the non-Salmon Stamp categories may be cut by as much as 1/3, I suggested that in drafting projects people develop two work plans, one at the level of funding available during the present biennium, and the other at 2/3 funding.
- 6) **Walleye management in Green Bay.** Tom Soles has been active contacting Department staff at all levels regarding walleye management, including stocking, in Green Bay. Terry reviewed the situation for the LMFT. Terry and others will meet next week to recommend how and to what extent Tom Soles’ suggestions should be implemented in the near future and to develop a plan for engaging both Walleyes for Tomorrow and the Green Bay GLSF in that program. The recommendation will be shared with the LMFT and presented to our Policy Committee for adoption.
- 7) **Open houses.** We reviewed plans for the open houses next week. The following individuals agreed to attend the open houses:
  - Racine – Eggold and Coffaro (?)
  - Cleveland – Hogler<sup>1</sup>, Kubisiak, Eggold and/or Hirethota, Peeters<sup>1</sup>
  - Green Bay – Hogler, Toney, Hasz, Peeters, Hansen
- 8) **OTC marking of chinook salmon.** We discussed the Michigan proposal to mark all stocked chinook salmon with OTC administered in food. I will respond to Michigan that at this time we still have too many questions to agree to participate. I will

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<sup>1</sup> Steve and Paul, I appreciate your willingness to attend both Cleveland and Green Bay, but if you want to get out of one, it’s OK with me; it looks like we’ll have plenty of people. My only request is that you check with each other so at least one of you is at each open house.

suggest, again, that the issue be taken up at the January LM Technical Committee meeting.

- 9) **Sturgeon.** We had a brief discussion of issues surrounding possible stocking of sturgeon in the Manitowoc River. Steve Hogler will draft a specific proposal for review by the LMFT.